

# First photographs of Grey Ground Thrush *Zoothera princei* for Nigeria, from Omo Forest Reserve

Taiwo C. Omotoriogun<sup>a,b</sup>, Omogbemi Temidayo<sup>b</sup>, Taiye A. Adeyanju<sup>b</sup>, U. Ottosson<sup>b</sup> and Jan T. Lifjeld<sup>a</sup>

**Premières photos de la Grive olivâtre *Zoothera princei* pour le Nigeria, de la Forêt classée d'Omo.** Le 30 mai 2012, deux Grives olivâtres *Zoothera princei* ont été capturées et photographiées dans la Forêt classée d'Omo, au sud-ouest du Nigeria. Bien que l'espèce ait été observée sur ce site il y a 15 ans, ceci est la première preuve photographique de sa présence au Nigeria.

On 30 May 2012 at 10.00 hrs, two Grey Ground Thrushes *Zoothera princei* were mist-netted simultaneously at a single location (06°55'90"N 04°19'77"E) near Erin Camp in primary forest within Omo Forest Reserve (Fig. 1). The birds were caught in the middle pockets of the mist-nets 1.2 m above ground. When approaching the nets, we heard a repeated high-pitched call, similar to that described by Borrow & Demey (2001).

The only previous report of Grey Ground Thrush in Omo Forest Reserve was by Green *et al.* (2007), who observed and subsequently mist-netted the species near Erin Camp in March–April 1997; no description was given. Prior to this, there was just a single unconfirmed sight record for Nigeria (Umuagwu, August 1953: Elgood *et al.* 1994).

Grey Ground Thrush is a very secretive species of moist lowland forest from eastern Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire to Ghana, and in Cameroon, Gabon, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and western Uganda (Collar 2005). It

forages by hopping on the forest floor searching the leaf litter (Borrow & Demey 2001). Although it is considered to be rare and decreasing due to ongoing habitat destruction and fragmentation, the species is currently classified as of Least Concern because it does not approach the threshold for Vulnerable under the range size criterion (BirdLife International 2012). Omo Forest, an Important Bird Area and World Biosphere Reserve, is being severely degraded due to excessive exploitation of timber, agricultural encroachment and other anthropogenic pressures (Ezealor 2001, Olmos & Turshak 2009).

## Acknowledgements

The National Centre for Biosystematics, Natural History Museum, University of Oslo, Norway, and the Research Council of Norway sponsored TCO's field work in Nigeria. Phil Hall provided useful information. Nicholas Wicks, Clifford Omonu and Stella Egbe assisted during field work. This is contribution no. 58 of the A. P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute.

## References

- BirdLife International. 2012. Species factsheet: *Zoothera princei*. [www.birdlife.org](http://www.birdlife.org) (accessed 27 July 2012).
- Borrow, N. & Demey, R. 2001. *The Birds of Western Africa*. London, UK: Christopher Helm.
- Collar, N. J. 2005. Family Turdidae (thrushes). In del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A. & Christie, D. A. (eds.) *Handbook of the Birds of the World*. Vol. 10. Barcelona: Lynx Edicions.
- Elgood, J. H., Heigham, J. B., Moore, A. M., Nason, A. M., Sharland, R. E. & Skinner, N. J. 1994. *The Birds of Nigeria: An Annotated Check-list*. BOU Check-list No. 4. Second edn. Tring: British Ornithologists' Union.
- Ezealor, A. U. 2001. Nigeria. In Fishpool, L. D. C. & Evans, M. I. (eds.) *Important Bird Areas in Africa and Associated Islands: Priority Sites for Conservation*.



**Figure 1.** Grey Ground Thrush / Grive olivâtre *Zoothera princei*, near Erin Camp, Omo Forest Reserve, 30 May 2012 (Taiwo Crossby Omotoriogun).

---

Newbury: Pisces Publications & Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International.

Green, A. A., Hall, P. & Leventis, A. P. 2007. Avifauna of Omo Forest Reserve, SW Nigeria. *Malimbus* 29: 16–30.

Olmos, F. & Turshak, G. L. 2009. Survey of birds in Omo Forest Reserve, south-western Nigeria. *Bull. ABC* 16: 185–197.

<sup>a</sup> *National Centre for Biosystematics, Natural History Museum, University of Oslo, Norway.*

<sup>b</sup> *A. P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute, Lamina, Jos Plateau State, PO Box 1304, Nigeria. E-mail: t.c.omotoriogun@nhm.uio.no*

Received 29 July 2012; revision accepted 20 November 2012.